

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 HA-05 IO-13 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 SS-15
/081 W

-----029208 290945Z /12

P R 280745Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9668
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGUI 2796

STATE ALSO FOR AID FOR AFR/CAWA

E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, PFOR, CT, US

SUBJ: CAE HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

REF: BANGUI 2666, STATE 302638

SUMMARY: THE SECOND, AND PRESUMABLY FINAL, ROUND OF THE POST
CORONATION DISCUSSION OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES TOOK
PLACE ON THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 26 WHEN CAE NATIONAL RADIO
AND TV CARRIED THE FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S DECEMBER 15
PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS. IN A PANEL DISCUSSION
FOLLOWING THE TV BROADCAST, A GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE STATED
THAT THE GOCAE FULLY SUPPORTED THE POSITION OF THE PRESIDENT AND
THAT THE POSITIONS OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS NOW APPEARED TO BE
VIRTUALLY THE SAME. IN THE SAME PANEL DISCUSSION I WAS ASKED TO
ELABORATE ON THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION AND TO COMMENT ON THE
RECENT U.S. AID CUT-OFF. I DID SO BY STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE WE
ATTACHED TO THE CONCEPT OF LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF
HAPPINESS, OUR INTENTION NOT TO INTERFERE IN THE CAE'S INTERNAL
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AFFAIRS, AND OUR HOPE FOR A POSITIVE EVOLUTION IN OUR BILATERAL
RELATIONS BASED ON A SHARED CONCERN FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
RIGHTS, END SUMMARY.

1. ON RECEIPT OF STATE 302638 I SENT COPIES OF THE FRENCH TEXT
OF THE PRESIDENT'S DECEMBER 15 PRESS CONFERENCES STATEMENT TO THE
FOREIGN MINISTER, INTERIOR MINISTER POTOLOT AND THE MINISTER FOR

RADIO AND TELEVISION BARTHELEMY YANGONGO, TO WHOM I HAD EARLIER PROTESTED ABOUT THE DECEMBER 7 ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION OF U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE (BANGUI 2666). ON DECEMBER 24 YANGONGO TELEPHONED ME TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO BROADCAST THAT NIGHT THE CARTER STATEMENT IN ITS ENTIRITY, SINCE IT APPEARED TO BE FULLY CONSISTENT WITH THE GOCAE'S OWN POLICY. IN FACT, THE BROADCAST WAS DEFERRED UNTIL THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 26 WHEN NATIONAL RADIO AND TV CARRIED THE FULL TEXT.

2. AN HOUR AND A HALF BEFORE THE TV BROADCAST I WAS CONTACTED BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORIENTATION MINISTRY AND ASKED TO PARTICIPATE IN A PANEL DISCUSSION TO FOLLOW THE READING OF THE CARTER STATEMENT. I READILY AGREED TO DO SO. THE PANEL DISCUSSION, LATER BROADCAST ON NATIONAL RADIO AS WELL, INVOLVED ONLY THE SECRETARY GENERAL, MYSELF AND A SENIOR TECHNICAL COUNSELOR AT THE MINISTRY. AFTER READING THE STATEMENT, THE COUNSELOR SAID THAT THE EARLIER ROUNDTABLE HAD TAKEN PLACE BECAUSE OF CRITICAL AMERICAN STATEMENTS ABOUT THE CORONA HION. HE WAS NOW HAPPY TO NOTE THAT THE USG'S POSITION APPEARED TO COINCIDE WITH THAT OF THE GOCAE. HE ASKED ME TO PROVIDE FURTHER COMMENT ON THE USG'S POSITION.

3. I THANKED THE GOVERNMENT FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON U.S. HUMAN RIGHTS' POLICIES. DRAWING ON THE PRESIDENT'S BALTIMORE SUN ARTICLE EARLIER THIS YEAR, I SAID THAT FOR US HUMAN RIGHTS COULD BE SUMMED UP IN JEFFERSON'S PHRASE "LIFE, LIBERTY AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS". LIFE IMPLIED THE RIGHT OF INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON; LIBERTY INCLUDED LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE, AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND PRESS; AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS ENCOMPASSED THE RIGHT TO NOURISHMENT, HOUSING, MEDICAL CARE AND EDUCATION AS SET OUT IN THE SECOND PART OF THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN. THESE WERE COMMON GOALS TOWARDS WHICH OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD WORK. QUOTING THE PRESIDENT'S MARCH 17 UNGA SPEECH IN WHICH HE REFERRED TO THE TREND IN HUMAN AFFAIRS TOWARDS A MORE UNIVERSAL RESPECT OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN VALUES, I SAID WE WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS PROCESS AND HOPED CENTRAL AFRICA WOULD BE AS WELL.

& THE ORIENTATION MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL WAS THEN GIVEN A CHANCE TO SPEAK. IN A CONFUSED AND JUMBLED SERIES OF COMMENTS HE REFERRED TO THE CAE'S SURPRISE AT U.S. CRITICISM OF THE CORONATION AND THE LACK OF AN OFFICIAL USG DENIAL OF FALSE PRESS REPORTS WHICH AMOUNTED TO INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE CAE. I REPLIED THAT WHILE THERE HAD UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN MISREPORTING OF THE USG POSITION IN THE AMERICAN AND FOREIGN PRESS, WE HAD PROVIDED NECESSARY CLARIFICATION DIRECTLY TO THE GOCAE THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. WITH REGARD TO AID WE WOULD BE CONTINUING WITH CERTAIN ONGOING PROJECTS BUT HAD PUT

OFF CONSIDERATION OF A NUMBER OF OTHERS. I SAID THAT WE HAD MADE NO COMMENTARY ON THE CORONATION AND THAT AS THE PRESIDENT HAD SAID, WE HAD NO WISH TO TELL OTHER NATIONS WHAT POLITICAL SYSTEMS THEY SHOULD HAVE. HOWEVER, ALL NATIONS WHO HAD SIGNED THE UN CHARTER AND ADHERED TO THE INTERNATIONAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAD AN OBLIGATION TO SPEAK OUT ON HUMAN RIGHTS MATTERS. IT WAS IN THIS SPIRIT THAT WE HAD COMMENTED IN THE PAST. WE HOPED FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE CAE AND IT WAS TOWARDS THIS END THAT WE WERE WORKING.

5. COMMENT: THE CAE IS PRESUMABLY ONE OF THE FEW COUNTRIES TO CARRY THE FULL TEXT OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON ITS NATIONAL RADIO AND TV. THE DECISION WAS BOKASSA'S, AS HE PERSONALLY SIGNED THE INSTRUCTION TO DO SO. TO MY KNOWLEDGE THIS IS THE FIRST TIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT CAE MEDIA HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO A FOREIGN AMBASSADOR TO DISCUSS A MATTER OF SUBSTANCE, AND ONE OF VERY CONSIDERABLE SENSITIVITY AT THAT. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS ABOUT DIFFERENT POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND THE WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT CRITICISM WITHOUT IT BECOMING A SOURCE OF ENMITY STRIKE A

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9669
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGUI 2796

STATE ALSO FOR AID FOR AFR/CAWA

RESPONSIVE NOTE HERE. THE UNFORTUNATE AND HOSTILE TONE OF THE
EARLIER YANGONGO ROUNDTABLE NOW APPEARS TO BE BEHIND US. THE
GOCAE IS OBVIOUSLY CONCERNED ABOUT ITS HUMAN RIGHTS IMAGE AND IS
TRYING TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. THIS FACT PROVIDES SOME HOPE
THAT IT MAY GO BEYOND WORDS AND STATEMENTS TO CONCRETE STEPS IN
1978. WE SHALL DO WHAT WE CAN TO SEE THAT THIS IS SO.
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